R.A. 1st Lyk.

Laira Green. 15 March 1839.

My dear Son,

Remember me to Mancer, with my love to his wife, if they should be yet in town. Tell him that I have a letter of his, written fifteen years ago, full of detestation against the selfishness and pomposity of Dilke, and that I wonder he can recommend any one to call on him. Were you to do such a thing, or to return his greeting otherwise than with contempt, I must — I could not help it — consider you as ranked among my enemies. No explanation — nothing could ever after reconcile me to such conduct. If he should accidentally meet with you, and civilly accost you — spit in his face. He never did me but one favour, though he had the power to do many; for that I made him a present to the amount of £11; I have done for him innumerable acts of kindness. In money transactions alone, I have lent him £50 for four years; yet when I asked him to lend me £20 for four months, he stared at me! To crown all, his infamous treachery towards me last year ought to make any friend of mine despise him. Nor, if he could, would he be of any service to you in any of your views; his own selfishness, and his jealousy (long entertained) of me would prevent it. Nor with his piggish son ought you to exchange a salutation. He, pig as he is, sways his father on certain points; and I have traced some of the father's acts against me, in my thoughts, to the son's instigation.

I sent you a "Journal" yesterday; and one was sent to Tonbridge. An exchange is desired. Tell Henry that, if enriched by the "Examiner", the exchange of Papers shall be regular. The "Examiner" is not much known in the town of Plymouth, though it is taken in by persons in the neighbourhood.

So, you are writing an Opera! and some one, you don't say who, tells you the dialogue is too common. Here is the difficulty. Dramatic dialogue must be easy as an old glove, yet such as mere conversational folk's could not utter. Of rules you must read much; Shakespeare, in his comedies, the prose parts, is the grand model; the "Beggar's Opera" next; then Sheridan, though he is almost too artificial, like Congreve, whose dialogue seems like bits cut out of a common place book of good sayings. Goldoni, whoever told you, is poor in dialogue, though rich in character. Molière is too refined in his comedies of verse — but how can verse suit easy conversation? All this is said to encourage you, to put you in the right path, though I had no more idea of your writing an Opera than of my writing an epic poem. Tell me every thing of your pursuits, because they interest me more than any other matter.

I thought Fanny was at Hinton. She is conceited and with a weak mind, as I always said; and she is with warm passions and coldness of heart — two qualities that frequently go together — to an extent with her that I know not where it will end. Her last letter to me was so full of self-sufficiency and blarney, that you need not fear my taking the trouble of reproaching her, or perhaps of writing to her. I never met with a more affected fool — ugly to boot.

Zella must be a forward girl to write a novel at fourteen or thereabouts; it is almost enough to put one out of conceit in novel writing. I thought it was necessary, for a novel, to have some knowledge and much experience.

Your notion of going to Germany must be considered, and duly. You are too sanguine in your hopes, too depressed in your disappointments. Steering between the two, you may look forward reasonably to getting a situation.

Tell me, if you can, more of Margaret. Is her mother dead? — or her father? — or what?

I like to hear of your taking pleasure. Only beware that you do not exceed your income; if you do, I know not where you can hope for assistance. I live most moderately, so as to avoid every species of dilemma. When better days come, then, but not before, we may launch out a little.

Remembrances to all friends,

Your affectionate father,

Chas. Brown.

The Howells desire me to send remembrances.

Mr Parkins Brown.